13 - Aviation Operations

Introduction

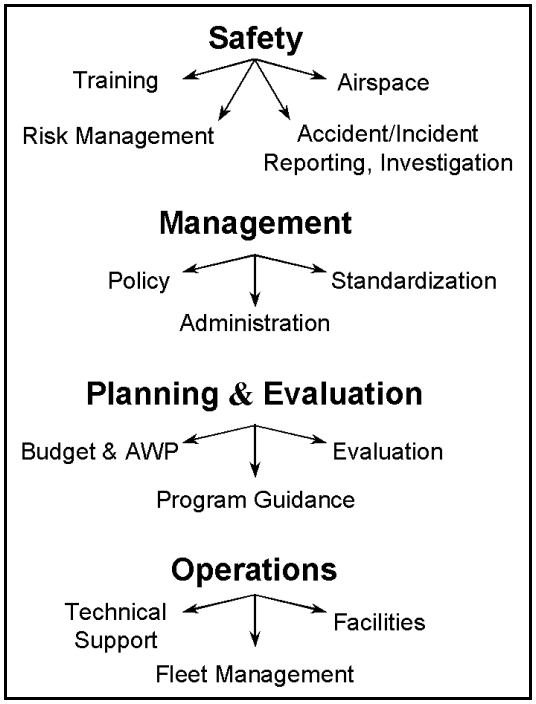
Purpose and Scope

Aviation managers have leadership responsibility for resource missions that use aircraft. Standards and prerequisite qualifications ensure that aviation services are practical, low risk, and benefit the bureau and the public.

Aviation is used in most BLM programs. Every person in the aviation organization provides a service for the customer, whether the customer is the user of public resources or an operating function within the organization.

Clear direction and good management practices can reduce risks inherent to aviation missions. Aviation program success increases with planning, high standards, training, and commitment to safety for each mission.

The four major emphases of aviation management are safety, management, planning and evaluation, and operations. Refer to the chart for an illustration of these components and their sub-components.



Roles and Responsibilities

Office of Aircraft Services The Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) is responsible for departmental policy related to aircraft services and facilities, but has no operational responsibility. OAS provides departmental level aviation safety and accident investigation, aircraft and pilot inspection, procurement of aircraft, and policy development. Refer to 112 DM 12 for a complete list of responsibilities.

National Office Level The BLM Office of Fire and Aviation develops bureau policy, procedures, and standards, and maintains functional oversight and interagency coordination for all aviation activities. The primary goals are safety and cost-effectiveness. The national office promotes accident prevention efforts and supports bureau functions and missions, including fire suppression. Refer to *BLM Manual 9400* for further information on aviation policy and procedures.

State Office Level State aviation managers (SAMs) are located in all BLM state offices. SAMs implement aviation program objectives and directives to support the BLM mission and each state's goals. Several states have additional support staff, aircraft dispatchers, and/or pilots assigned to support aircraft operations and to provide technical expertise. A state aviation operations and management plan is required to outline goals of the state's aviation program and to identify state-specific policy and procedures.

Important Note: *BLM Manual 9400* stipulates that a state is not generally authorized to supplement this policy with more restrictive policy or procedures than the national policy, unless the policy or procedure is approved by the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.

Local Level Field managers staff and manage their programs as necessary to conduct their aviation operations safely. While many field offices have aviation management as a collateral duty, during periods of intense fire activity, it is still absolutely critical and necessary that aviation oversight be maintained. Assistance from the state office, cooperators, resource ordering assistance, aviation safety assistance team (ASATs)—are all resources that should be considered when other duties interfere with aviation management.

Aviation Information Resources

There is a significant amount of aviation reference material available to BLM aviation managers and users. Agency and interagency manuals, handbooks, and guides provide both broad policy guidance and specific procedural requirements. **Note: In all cases departmental policy (DMs, OPMs, and bureau policy) will take precedence.**

In addition, safety alerts, instruction memoranda, information bulletins, incident reports, and other guidance or information are issued as the need arises.

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State and district aviation managers must maintain an up-to-date reference library with all aviation policy and procedural references.

Tactical aircraft bases and other fire users of aviation resources (e.g., air tactical group supervisors) should maintain those applicable portions of the overall aviation reference library.

Aviation Safety

Risk Assessment and Risk Management

All aviation missions have some inherent risk. The key is to manage risk based on acceptable limits and standards. Risk management is a five-step process:

1) Identify hazards.

2) Use a hazards analysis to determine (1) the effect on personnel and equipment should the hazard be encountered, and (2) the probability that the hazard will be encountered.

3) Weigh the risk against the benefit of performing the mission.

4) Mitigate risk by establishing and implementing controls. Control may be as substantial as writing a special-use plan or as simple as conducting a safety briefing.

5) Supervision by qualified personnel is critical to successful risk management.

Risk assessment is part of the risk management process, and can range from the simple to the complex. Assessing risk allows personnel to identify hazards, the degree of risk associated with each, and place hazards in perspective relative to the mission. This enables managers to determine whether or not to cancel a mission. A decision made to conduct the mission requires implementing controls to ensure success. Risk assessment must be conducted by individuals qualified by training and experience.

Methods for aviation hazard assessment and implementation control can be found in the interagency guides relating to airspace coordination, airtanker base operations, helicopter operations, leadplane operations, and air tactical operations.

Refer to Chapter 3 of the *Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG)*, for a detailed discussion of the risk management process.

Aviation Safety Assistance

During high fire activity locally or statewide, it is advisable to request the following national aviation safety assistance for helicopter or fixed-wing operations:

Aviation Safety Manager
Operations Technician
Pilot Inspector
Maintenance Inspector (optional)
Avionics Inspector (optional)

Aviation Watch Out Situations

As part of risk management, especially during high activity fire, each aviation manager and employee should ask the following questions:

- Is the flight necessary?
- Who is in charge?
- Are all hazards identified and have you made them known?
- Should the operation or flight be stopped due to change in conditions?
  - Communications?
  - Confusion?
  - Personnel?
  - Weather?
  - Turbulence?
  - Conflicting priorities?
- Is there a better way to do it?
- Are you driven by the task and a sense of urgency?
- Can you justify your actions?
- Are other aircraft in the area?
- Does the pilot accept the mission?
- Are any guidelines being ignored or policies being broken?
- Are communications getting tense?
- Are you deviating from the assigned operation or flight?

Mission Planning/Hazard Mitigation

Pre-flight planning will reduce inherent risks to any aviation mission to acceptable levels. During flight planning and scheduling, at a minimum the following must be addressed:

- Completion/submission of the aircraft flight request/schedule
- Cost analysis
- Assessment and mitigation of hazards
- Selection of aircraft
- Scheduling of aircraft with vendors or agency pilots
- Pilot and aircraft approvals checked
- Pre-flight briefings

Aircraft and Pilot Carding

The OAS is responsible for procurement, approval, and carding of pilots and aircraft used and paid for by BLM. With the exception of life-threatening situations or undercover law enforcement missions, personnel shall not fly with pilots or in aircraft that have not been approved (carded). Note that some state agency aircraft and pilots are approved by either the OAS or the USFS. These pilots may or may not carry a card, but they must have a letter of approval.

Use of military or National Guard aircraft and pilots *The Military Use Handbook* (NFES 2175) should be used when planning or conducting aviation operations involving military aircraft. All ordering of military assets is done through the NICC; all ordering of National Guard assets is done through the governor of the state that owns the Guard resources.

Dispatchers or aviation managers are responsible for verifying pilot and aircraft carding during mission planning and aircraft procurement. Prior to any flight, it is the responsibility of the helicopter manager, flight manager, or employee to check for pilot and aircraft cards or letters of approval.

Field personnel have no authority to suspend or revoke a pilot's card. Only the agency contracting officer or other agency-designated official may suspend or revoke a card. However, other individuals (e.g., helicopter managers, helibase managers) can suspend operations that are being conducted improperly.

An employee may refuse to participate on a flight that is unsafe.

Aviation Safety Briefing

Every passenger will receive a briefing prior to each flight. The briefing may be conducted by the pilot, flight manager, helicopter manager, fixed-wing base manager, or an individual with the required training and experience to conduct an aviation safety briefing. The briefing should include (but is not limited to):

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): for special-use airplane missions and all helicopter flights, all passengers, pilot(s), and air crew members must wear a flight helmet or hard hat (including chin strap), flame resistant clothing, ear and eye protection, boots, and other survival equipment as applicable. For point-to-point flights, no PPE is required.

- Approach and departure paths: the desired route for personnel to and away from the aircraft (e.g. always approach and depart from the downslope side of helicopters parked on uneven terrain); approach and depart helicopters in a crouch; stay in pilot's view; stay clear of landing areas/taxiways while aircraft are approaching or departing; never go near the tail of helicopters. Do not approach airplanes from the front.

- Tools and equipment: the proper securing of tools and equipment while awaiting aircraft transport; proper methods for carrying tools to and from the aircraft; assignments for individuals loading tools/equipment.

- Seating in aircraft: seat belt fastened at all times; no movement between seats unless authorized by pilot; unbuckle only when directed by the pilot, air crew member, or helitack personnel; follow the instructions of the pilot at all times; know the location of first-aid kit, survival kit, fire extinguisher, emergency locator transmitter (ELT), fuel/battery shutoff switch, radio operation, and oxygen (if available).

- Security of equipment: secure any loose items; all baggage secured in aircraft or in cargo compartment; never throw any object from or around any aircraft; never reach up or dart after any object that has become unsecured.

- Smoking: no smoking in or around aircraft and fuel sources.

- Emergency Exits: know the location and use.

Low-level Flight and Congested Area Exemptions

Note: When referring to low-level flight exemptions and retardant dropping in congested areas, the terms airtanker coordinator, leadplane pilot, air tactical

pilot, air tactical officer, and aerial supervision module (ASM) all mean the same thing.

Aircraft engaged in fire retardant or water drops may operate without regard for the following requirements, provided the deviation is limited to fire operations for cargo dropping, and leadplane operations associated with the aerial application of water, fire suppressants, or retardants are conducted by or for the DOI.

1) A thorough air survey for obstacles, and check for air conditions in each operating area, shall be made prior to low-level flight operations.

2) All flights below 500 feet shall be confined to immediate areas being treated or where operational requirements make such low-level flights essential.

3) All aircraft must follow planned flight course.

4) Low-level flight operations must be under VFR conditions and during daylight hours – ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. (See local sunrise/ sunset chart for actual times.)

5) Prior clearance must be obtained from the appropriate air traffic controller before any flight can be made in a controlled air space.

6) Pilot will avoid creating any hazard to passengers or to persons or property on the ground.

BLM-operated airtankers can drop retardant in congested areas under the authority given in FAR Part 137.5. Dropping fire retardant in congested areas shall be avoided in normal situations. Where such operations are considered necessary, depending on special circumstances, they may be authorized subject to these special limitations:

1) Airtanker operations in congested areas may be conducted at the special request of the responsible agency (city, rural fire department, county, state, or federal fire suppression agency).

2) A qualified airtanker coordinator (leadplane pilot/air tactical pilot) will be ordered immediately on identification of the congested area and will directly supervise all airtanker drops.

3) The FAA office (air traffic control center, tower, or flight service station) responsible for airspace control in the vicinity of proposed airtanker operations will be notified prior to or as soon as possible after the beginning

of the operation, and an appropriate airspace restriction must be requested by the responsible fire agency prior to or as soon as possible after beginning airtanker operations. (Request all temporary flight restrictions from the ATC, but notify local tower and FSS.)

4) No operation shall be conducted until a positive communication link has been established between the airtanker coordinator or aerial supervision module (ASM), airtanker pilot(s), and the official directly supervising fire suppression for the responsible fire suppression agency.

5) The official supervising fire suppression for the responsible fire agency or designee shall advise the ASM that all non-essential people and movable property have been cleared from the area to be treated by airtankers prior to commencing airtanker operations.

6) The ASM shall be personally satisfied that no non-essential people or movable property will be placed in hazard by the proposed airtanker operation prior to ordering any airtanker drops.

7) The first retardant pass of each series (repeated retardant drops using the same pattern) shall be preceded by a dry run flown on the same pattern as the planned retardant drops.

Aviation Hazards

An aviation hazard is any condition, act, or set of circumstances that compromises the safety of personnel engaged in aviation activities. These hazards may address, *but are not limited to*, such areas as:

- Deviations from policies, procedures, regulations, and instructions as contained in manual and handbook releases, interim directives, standard operating guides, etc.
- Hazardous materials handling and/or transport.
- Airspace/flight following.
- Deviation from planned operations, flight plan, type of use (e.g., general to special-use).
- Failure to utilize Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) or Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE).
- Inadequate training, or failure to meet training requirements.

- Failure to utilize load calculations and/or manifests correctly.
- Weather conditions.
- Ground operations.
- Pilot procedures.
- Fuel contamination.
- Unsafe actions by pilot, air crew, passengers, or support personnel.

Aviation hazards also exist in the form of aerial hazards such as wires, low-flying aircraft, and obstacles protruding beyond normal surface features. Known aerial hazards must be identified.

This is particularly crucial when aircraft are planned to be in the special-use profile of low-altitude flight. Each office will post, maintain, and annually update a "known aerial hazard map" for the local operations encompassing areas where aircraft are operated (regardless of agency land ownership), and will be posted in dispatch centers, permanent helibases, airtanker bases, air attack bases, etc.

All aviation personnel are responsible for hazard identification and mitigation. This includes pilots, flight crew personnel, aviation managers, incident air operations personnel, and passengers.

Aircraft Incidents/Accidents

Incidents An aircraft "incident" results in damage which meets less than serious criteria, or in an injury not requiring medical attention (first-aid only). Examples of incidents are:

- Damage to aircraft (less than accident criteria).
- Forced landing necessitated by failure of engines, systems, or components.
- Precautionary landing necessitated by apparent impending failure of engines, systems or components, or incapacitation of the flight crew.

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- Aircraft ground mishap (in which there is no intent to fly).
- Ground damage to aircraft (damage is incurred requiring repair or replacement before flight).

- Near mid-air collision (when airborne aircraft encroaches within 500 feet of another airborne aircraft, or a pilot or crew member determines that a collision hazard existed).

SAFECOM – **Incident/Hazard/Maintenance Deficiency Reporting**

The Department of the Interior agencies and USDA Forest Service have adopted a common incident/hazard reporting form called the SAFECOM (Safety Communiqué).

The local aviation management staff or designated individual is responsible for immediate completion and transmittal of the form. In their absence, any responsible agency individual with knowledge of the accident should make the report. The form is routed immediately to OAS, the agency's headquarters office, state aviation manager, and national aviation safety manager.

The report shall be forwarded by electronic mail or telefax to the state aviation manager within 72 hours after occurrence. Notify OAS and BLM aviation safety managers whenever an aircraft mishap involves damage or injury. Use the hot line or the most expeditious means possible. Call 1-888-464-7427. An electronic version of the SAFECOM form can be accessed at www.OAS.gov.

The objectives of the form are:

- To report any damage or injury (less than accident criteria) and any condition, act, observance, maintenance deficiency or circumstance which has potential to cause an aviation-related accident.
- To document all aviation hazards and incidents.
- To perform trend analyses for short- or long-term changes in policy and procedures, identify areas needing training, etc.
- To provide accountability for aviation mission participants and employee safety.

It is the responsibility of any individual (including contractors) who observes or who is involved in an aviation mishap to report the occurrence immediately to local aviation management staff. The local aviation manager is responsible for reviewing the report and forwarding it through agency channels. Within 48 hours after an aircraft incident, aviation hazard, or maintenance deficiency, the local aviation manager or participant in the flight shall complete and submit the SAFECOM Form. Timely reporting is essential in problem identification and accident prevention.

The agency with operational control of the aircraft at the time of the occurrence is responsible for completion of the SAFECOM and to submit it through its agency channels.

Accidents The definition for aircraft "accident" is lengthy and fairly technical. An investigation team will make the final determination as to classification. In general, if an occurrence was more serious than those described under the definition of "incident" above, then the occurrence should be treated as an accident.

Under 49 CFR 830 the operator is responsible for notifying the National Transportation and Safety Board (NTSB) of any accident.

Operations

Due to the volume of reference material contained in aviation policy and procedures documents, as well as their continual updating, specific procedures or guidance are not addressed to avoid omitting some item of critical information.

It is the responsibility of aviation managers and associated personnel (pilots, dispatcher, fire managers, etc.) to obtain the necessary documents and become familiar with their contents.

The *Departmental Manual 350-354 DM* and *Manual 9400 Aviation Management* are the umbrella documents for aviation policy and operations in the bureau. See Chapter 8 for more operational procedure information for tactical aviation resources.

Helicopter Operations

PPE Requirements As stated in the *Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide* (*IHOG)*, for firefighters "the only acceptable situation where a hard hat may be substituted for a flight helmet is as follows: passenger transportation between an established, managed helispot/helibase and an established, managed helispot/helibase." Firefighters in this case are defined as hand crews being shuttled to and from camp, primarily on project type fires. All other firefighters, e.g., initial attack helitack crews, miscellaneous fire overhead for recon and scouting, will be required to wear full PPE, including a flight helmet.

Helicopter Crew Personnel The IHOG is the primary reference for BLM personnel conducting helicopter operations. All personnel conducting rotor-wing

operations should be knowledgeable of the contents of the *IHOG* and have it available. Chapter 2 contains required experience, training, and qualification requirements for each helicopter crew position. Refer to Chapter 8 for additional information.

Helicopter Rappel The *Interagency Heli-Rappel Guide* (*IHRG*) is the reference for helicopter rappel operations; all fire rappel operations must be in compliance with the *IHRG* and approved by Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.

Aerial Ignition The *Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide* (IAIG) is the reference for all aerial ignition activities.

These guides (IHOG, IHRG, and IAIG) were developed to: define and standardize national interagency operating procedures for all helicopter operations, both fire and non-fire; facilitate the exchange of personnel from other agencies during periods of high fire activity (through standardization); provide a common interagency approach in the government's relationship with helicopter contractors; provide checklists, operational requirements, and special instructions for personnel at helibases; and provide a framework within which each government helibase with contract helicopters can provide supplemental site-specific guidance.

Airtanker Base Operations

Large airtankers are procured under national contracts. The management of these resources is governed by the requirements of the Departmental Manual, *BLM Manual 9400*, and the *Interagency Airtanker Base Operations Guide* (*IATBOG*). Airtankers are operated by commercial vendors in accordance with FAR Part 137.

The *IATBOG* is the reference for all airtanker base operations. This guide defines and standardizes national interagency operating procedures at all airtanker bases; facilitates the exchange of personnel from other agencies during periods of high fire activity (through standardization); provides a common interagency approach in the government's relationship with airtanker and retardant contractors; provide checklists, orientation outlines, and special instructions for personnel at airtanker bases; and provides a framework within which each airtanker base can provide supplemental site-specific guidance.

All personnel conducting airtanker base operations should know the *IATBOG* and have it available.

The startup/cutoff times as outlined in the *Interagency Leadplane Operations Guide* (*ILOG*) shall be followed. (These require air tactical or leadplane supervision of airtanker operations prior to or after sunrise and sunset.)

Airtanker Base Personnel The *IATBOG* identifies a generic table of organization and recommended staffing level for airtanker bases. This guide also describes the duties of various positions used at airtanker bases. There is currently no identified training for the positions at airtanker bases; however, the *IATBOG* contains a chart identifying recommended training for each position. It is also critical that reload bases staff up commensurate with the need during periods of moderate or high fire activity at the base.

Single Engine Airtanker (SEAT) Operations

An *Interagency SEAT Operating Guide* (*ISOG*) has been approved as policy by both the BLM and USFS (NFES # 1844).

Since a SEAT manager is now required to be assigned to SEAT operations, a SEAT manager course has been developed.

Leadplane Operations

The *Interagency Leadplane Operations Guide (ILOG)* is adopted by the Office of Fire and Aviation as operating procedures for BLM. Unless for reasons of safety, any deviation from the policies or procedures contained in the *ILOG* must be approved in writing by the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation. Refer to Chapter 8 for policy.

The only approved fixed wing, low-level operation below 500 feet for fire suppression activities are leadplane, ASM, and paracargo missions with approved pilots, aircraft, and aircrew.

The *ILOG* is the reference standard for leadplane operations. This guide was developed to define and standardize national interagency operating procedures for leadplanes; facilitate the exchange of personnel for other agencies during periods of high fire activity (through standardization); and provide checklists, orientation outlines, and special instructions for leadplane pilots.

All personnel conducting or involved in leadplane operations (e.g., ATGSs) should know the *ILOG* and have it available.

Air Tactical Operations

The air tactical group supervisor (ATGS) is primarily responsible for coordination of aircraft operations and firefighter safety when fixed and/or rotor wing aircraft

are operating on an incident. Specific duties and responsibilities are outlined in the *Fireline Handbook* (PMS 410-1). The ATGS reports to the air operations branch director (AOBD), or in the absence of the AOBD, to the Operations Section Chief (OSC), or in the absence of the OSC, to the Incident Commander. **When airborne, the ATGS works for the IC or OSC, depending on the size of the incident.** When the positions are in use on an incident, the Airtanker Coordinator (ATCO) and Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) will be supervised by the ATGS.

The (Draft) *Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor Guide* is adopted by the Office of Fire and Aviation as operating procedure for BLM air tactical operations. Unless for reasons of safety, any deviation from the policies or procedures contained in the ATGS Guide must be approved in writing by the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.

The *(Draft) Interagency Air Tactical Group Supervisor Guide* has been developed in order to maintain an effective national interagency ATGS program, high standards in training, certification, operating procedures, equipment, and program safety. This document will be the reference for BLM personnel using air tactical group supervisors or functioning in that role on an incident.

All personnel conducting or involved with air tactical operations (e.g., leadplane pilots, helicopter coordinators) should know this document and have it available.

Smokejumper Operations

The *Smokejumper Operations Guide* is available from the Alaska Fire Service (AFS) or NIFC. Also see Chapter 8.

Other Guides

There are various other operational guides used to standardize field operations e.g. *Interagency Smokejumper Pilot Operations Guide* (ISMOG). These guides are in different stages of development. As they are completed, they will be added to the *Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations*.

Agency-Owned Aircraft Operations

The Office of Fire and Aviation has developed standard operating procedures for agency-owned fleet aircraft operations and maintenance. These are adopted as policy by the Office of Fire and Aviation.

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Airspace Coordination

The *Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide* (*IACG*) is adopted by the Office of Fire and Aviation as policy and operating procedure for BLM airspace

coordination. Unless for reasons of safety, any deviation from the policies or procedures contained in the *IACG* must be approved in writing by the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation.

The *IACG* is the primary document to be used by BLM personnel (dispatchers, aviation managers, pilots, and ASMs) when dealing with airspace issues. This *IACG*, adopted as policy by both the director of OAS: the Director, Office of Fire and Aviation and the USDA Forest Service, promotes aviation safety by establishing safe, consistent, and standardized approaches to issues involving airspace and federal land management responsibilities.

State aviation managers (SAMs) are the primary contacts for airspace management issues.

Flight Management/Flight Following

Policy

The 9400-1a, aircraft request/flight schedule form, will be used for approval and flight planning. This form will be completed between the chief dispatcher and flight manager for the mission. The fixed-wing or helicopter manager will use this form to brief the pilot on the mission. Outlined below are the basics relating to flight planning, pre-flight briefing, and flight following.

Special use flight plans require approval by the immediate supervisor and final approval by the appropriate line manager.

Types of Flights

There are two basic types of flights: **point-to-point** and **special use**. Point-to-point flights typically originate at one developed airport or permanent helibase, with the direct flight to another developed airport or permanent helibase. Point-to-point flights are conducted solely for the purpose of transportation of personnel or cargo, and do not involve special use flight.

Special use flights are defined by exclusion as all flights not meeting the definition of "point-to-point" flight. As such, special use flight requires work to be performed in the air (e.g., retardant or water delivery, fire reconnaissance, smokejumper delivery), or through a combination of ground and aerial work (e.g., delivery of personnel and/or cargo from helibases to helispots or unimproved landing sites, rappelling or cargo letdown, horse herding).

Special use flights inherently require greater planning due to the greater number of hazards and consequent higher degree of risk commonly involved in non-point-to-point flights. These special use flights require approved pilots, air crew, and aircraft.

A point-to-point flight is conducted at greater than 500 feet above ground level (AGL) with no descent at any time below 500 feet AGL. By exclusion, all other flights are special use.

Fixed-wing Aircraft

Point-to-point Flights All BLM flights shall be approved using an aircraft request/flight schedule, BLM Form 9400-1a. This form is used to plan, brief the pilot, and track point-to-point flights.

Bureau policy requires designating a fixed-wing manager for each point-to-point flight transporting personnel. The basic duties and responsibilities of the flight manager are:

1) Check pilot card to ensure qualifications are current for aircraft type.

2) Check aircraft card to ensure that aircraft is current and approved for mission.

3) Flight plan/flight following: filed with FAA or agency, facilitate as needed. (Filing, opening, and closing the FAA flight plan is the responsibility of the pilot.)

4) Brief pilot on flight route/mission objective.

5) Pilot briefing to passengers.

6) Ensure passengers have received and understand briefing; all personnel on board are either air crew members, or authorized or official passengers.

7) Check fiscal documents; ensure flight payment paperwork is accurate and, if BLM is paying for the flight, that the aircraft is under some type of procurement document and all signatures secured.

Tactical/Special-Use Flights Tactical missions are aircraft operations associated with initial attack of wildfires and large fire support. The flight request form, 9400-1a, is used when requesting fixed-wing or helicopters for non-tactical, non-fire missions. Special use flights require an approved special use plan. A one-time flight may use the reverse side of BLM Form 9400-1a for this purpose.

The fixed-wing or helicopter manager will brief the pilot using the BLM From 9400-1a; and is responsible for the welfare of the bureau employee(s) while on the mission.

PPE is required for a special-use mission.

All personnel will meet training and qualification standards required for the mission.

Special-use flight for fixed-wing aircraft includes the following flight missions:

- Flights conducted within 500 feet AGL.
- Water or retardant application.
- Parachute delivery of personnel or cargo.
- ATGS operations.
- Airtanker coordinator operations.
- Takeoff or landing requiring special techniques due to hazardous terrain, obstacles, pinnacles, or surface conditions.
- Fire reconnaissance (precision recon).

Helicopters

Tactical/Special-Use Flights Dispatching contract or CWN helicopters for initial attack or other tactical missions, requires a resource order.

Special-use helicopter flights include the following flight missions:

- Flights conducted within 500 feet AGL.
- Water or retardant application.
- Helicopter coordinator and air tactical group supervisor operations.
- Aerial ignition activities.
- External load operations.
- Night vision goggle operations.

- Hoversite/autosurvey.
- Rappelling.
- Aerial capture, eradication, and tagging of animals.
- Offshore vessel or platform landings.
- Toe-in, single-skid and step-out landings (prior authorization or exemption required).
- Takeoff or landing requiring special techniques due to hazardous terrain, obstacles, pinnacles, or surface conditions.
- Free-fall cargo.

The use of PPE is required for both helicopter flight missions and ground operations. The specific items to be worn are dependent on either the type of flight, the function an individual is performing, or the type of ground operation being conducted. Refer to the tables in Chapter 9 of the IHOG for specific requirements.

Flight Following

Flight following is the responsibility of the scheduling office and will remain so until transferred through a documented, positive hand-off. Flight-following reports from the aircraft are the responsibility of the pilot-in-command (PIC) in accordance with 14 CFR. Violation of flight following standards requires submission of a SAFECOM per the Departmental Manual.

For tactical aircraft that cross dispatch area geographic boundaries, the receiving unit is responsible to confirm arrival of the aircraft via telephone to the receiving GACC.